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# Cuban Captive Deal Seen As Red Cross Gets Ship

By the Associated Press

Loan of a ship to the Red Cross and reports of activity in the Baltimore port have stirred speculation that negotiations for release of 1,200 Cuban prisoners may be nearing a climax.

The speculation was heightened by these developments yesterday:

1. The Red Cross said the S. S. African Pilot had been made available to it for use if necessary, to ship medicines and supplies to Cuba as barter for the captives.

2. The Baltimore Sun said the African Pilot was raising steam and had signed most of

her crew for a sailing time of noon today for Port Everglades, Fla., to pick up the cargo.

3. James B. Donovan, negotiator for the liberation of the prisoners, was in Miami today, reportedly en route to Havana. A Cuban Families Committee official said Mr. Donovan arrived last night accompanied by Alvaro Sanchez and Mrs. Berta Barreto, key figures in the negotiations.

There was speculation that Mr. Donovan would fly to Havana tomorrow in an effort to complete the deal. Committee officials said only that they were hopeful of early liberation of the captives. They cautioned

against undue optimism or the spreading of rumors.

The prisoners were captured in the ill-starred attempt to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in April, 1961. Mr. Donovan has been negotiating with Mr. Castro since August and at one point reportedly was close to an agreement; the prisoners in exchange for medicine and other non-military items in short supply on the Communist island.

Mr. Castro had asked a ransom of \$62 million.

Roy Johnson of the American Red Cross said the African Pilot has been loaned by the Farrell Lines. But he said he had no information about the Cuban prisoner negotiations.

## Early Sailing

The Baltimore Sun said last night that all deck officers and part of the crew had been signed on with the remainder expected to be on board for a noontime sailing.

The Sun added that the ship apparently would not be unloaded in Cuba until the prisoners were en route by air to the United States, probably Miami.

Mr. Donovan, who negotiated the swap of Russian Spy Rudolph Abel for American U-2 Pilot Francis Gary Powers, said he is representing the prisoners' families in the negotiations. There have been published reports the administration has taken an active behind-the-scenes role.